

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK

SUBJECT: RAIL UNION COMES TO THE AID OF THE LABOR PARTY

REF: LONDON'S A-141 (#)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: LEADERS OF THE ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN (ASLEF) - BY A VOTE OF 5 TO 4 - HAVE ACCEDED TO A REQUEST BY LABOR PARTY LEADER HAROLD WILSON THAT IT CALL OFF THEIR INDUSTRIAL ACTION DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY

2. IN ANNOUNCING THE UNION'S DECISION - WHICH WAS REACHED AFTER A LONG MEETING LAST EVENING (FEBRUARY 11) OF THE UNION'S EXECUTIVE - ASLEF GENERAL SECRETARY RAY BUCKTON SAID "WE WILL DO ALL IN OUR POWER AS A UNION TO GET THE RETURN OF THE LABOR GOVERNMENT. THIS IS WHY WE ACCEPTED THE REQUEST." THE ASLEF DECISION WILL RESULT IN A RETURN TO NORMAL WORKING OF ALL OF THE APPROXIMATELY 29,000 LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS WHO, SINCE DECEMBER 12, HAVE REFUSED TO WORK OVERTIME,
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SUNDAYS OR REST DAYS, AND HAVE ENGAGED IN A SERIES OF

SLOW-DOWNS AND LIGHTNING STRIKES WHICH HAVE DISRUPTED PASSENGER TRANSPORT, PARTICULARLY IN THE LONDON AREA. THE DECISION HAS ALSO MEANT THE CANCELLATION OF PLANNED ONE-DAY STOPPAGES IN BRITISH RAIL'S SOUTHERN REGION (SCHEDULED FOR TODAY), THE MIDLANDS AND THE SCOTTISH REGIONS.

3. AS A RESULT OF THE ASLEF DECISION, BRITISH RAIL HAS DECLARED THAT IT WOULD NOW BE POSSIBLE TO RENEW NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE THREE UNIONS IN THE RAILROAD INDUSTRY, WHICH ALSO INCLUDES THE NATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYMEN (NUR), AND THE TRANSPORT SALARIED STAFFS' ASSOCIATION (TSSA). ASLEF WILL CONSIDER THIS CALL FOR A RENEWAL OF NEGOTIATIONS, BUT THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT (SEE LONDON'S A-141, FEBRUARY 12, 1974, FOR AN ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUES.)

4. COMMENT: THE ASLEF DECISION TO CALL OFF ITS INDUSTRIAL ACTION DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN CAN ONLY ASSIST THE LABOR PARTY. ONE OF THE MAJOR REASONS WHY THE ASLEF EXECUTIVE WAS PERSUADED TO DO SO IS THAT IT WAS INFORMED THAT THE LABOR PARTY COULD LOSE MANY MARGINAL SEATS IF THE UNION CONTINUES ITS INDUSTRIAL ACTION, WHICH HAS SEVERELY DISRUPTED PASSENGER TRAFFIC AND HAS BEEN EXTREMELY UNPOPULAR WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC, PARTICULARLY THE MANY THOUSANDS OF LONDON COMMUTERS. HAROLD WILSON'S ACTION IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH HIS FAILURE TO CALL UPON THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINERS TO POSTPONE THEIR STRIKE.

ANNENBERG

NOTE BY OC/T: (#) REF NOT IDENTIFIED.

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